option in connection with said subscriber in response to an absence of said second command input for a duration of said silent delay period.

5.   (Amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein said first and second commands each comprise a speech input.

6.   (Amended) A method of telephone dialing using a voice activated dialer including a directory of subscriber names and telephone numbers, the method comprising the steps of:

selecting one of said subscribers most closely corresponding to a first speech input;

providing a speech output corresponding to the selected one of said subscribers;

providing a silent delay period of a predetermined duration immediately subsequent to a completion of said step of providing a speech output; and

selectively (i) initiating alternate processing related to the selected one of the subscribers in response to a receipt of a command input identifying said alternate processing during said silent delay period, and (ii) dialing the telephone number corresponding to the selected one of said subscribers immediately after said delay period and in response to an absence of said command input for a duration of said silent delay period.

29.   (Amended) A method of telephone dialing using a voice activated dialer including a directory of subscriber names and telephone numbers, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a first speech input;

recognizing said first speech input to provide first speech content data;

selecting one of said subscribers most closely corresponding to said first speech content data;

providing a speech output corresponding to the selected one of said subscribers;

providing a silent delay period of a predetermined duration within a range of 1.2 to 2.3 seconds immediately subsequent to a completion of said step of providing a speech output;

listening for a second speech input during said silent period;

recognizing said second speech input to provide second speech content data; and

selectively (i) initiating alternate processing related to the selected one of said subscribers in response to said second speech content data including an alternate processing command, and,

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otherwise, (ii) dialing the telephone number corresponding to the selected one of said subscribers immediately after said delay period.

32. (Amended) A voice response unit comprising:

means for receiving an identifier;

means for selecting a first processing option in response to said first identifier;

means for providing a voice message indicative of said first processing option selected;

means for providing a silent delay period of a predetermined duration immediately subsequent to a completion of providing said voice message; and

means for selectively (i) initiating alternate processing in connection with said identifier in response to a receipt of a command input during said silent delay period, and (ii) initiating said first processing option in connection with said identifier in response to an absence of said command input for a duration of said silent delay period.

36. (Amended) A voice activated dialer comprising:

a memory storing a directory of subscriber names and telephone numbers;

comparison means for selecting one of said subscribers most closely corresponding to a first speech input;

speech output means for providing a speech output corresponding to the selected one of said subscribers;

timer means for providing a silent delay period of a predetermined duration immediately subsequent to a completion of providing said speech output; and

control means for selectively (i) initiating alternate processing in connection with the selected one of said subscribers in response to a receipt of a command input during said silent delay period, and (ii) dialing the telephone number corresponding to the selected one of said subscribers immediately after said delay period and in response to an absence of said command input for a duration of said silent delay period.

52. (Amended) A voice activated dialer comprising:

a memory storing a directory of subscriber names and telephone numbers;

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a speech recognition engine receiving a speech input and providing content data derived from said speech input signal;

a processor responsive to said content data for selecting one of said subscribers;

an audio output providing a speech signal corresponding to the selected one of said subscribers; and

a timer providing a silent delay period of a predetermined duration immediately subsequent to a completion of providing said speech signal,

wherein said processor selectively (i) initiates alternate processing in connection with the selected one of said subscribers in response to a receipt of a command input during said silent delay period, and (ii) initiates a dialing of the telephone number corresponding to the selected one of said subscribers immediately after said delay period and in response to an absence of said command input for a duration of said silent delay period.

55.   (Amended) A voice activated dialer comprising:

a memory storing a directory of subscriber names and telephone numbers;

a speech recognition engine responsive to a speech input for providing speech content data; and

a processor responsive to said speech content data and to a set of instructions for

(i) selecting one of said subscribers most closely corresponding to first speech content data;

(ii) providing a speech output corresponding to the selected one of said subscribers;

(iii) providing a silent delay period of a predetermined duration within a range of 1.2 to 2.3 seconds immediately after providing said speech output;

(iv) initiating alternate processing in connection with the selected one of said subscribers in response to second speech content data including an alternate processing command, and, otherwise, (v) dialing the telephone number corresponding to the selected one of said subscribers immediately after said delay period.

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Please add the following new claims:

--58. (New) A method comprising the steps of:

performing speech recognition of a first speech input to select a designated subscriber;

playing a voice message indicative of a first processing option in connection with said designated subscriber;

providing a silent delay period immediately subsequent to a completion of said playing step; and

selectively (i) identifying a second processing option specified by a second speech input and, in response, automatically initiating said second processing option in connection with said designated subscriber, and (ii) automatically initiating said first processing option in connection with said subscriber is response to an absence of said second speech input during said silent period.

--59. (New) The method according to claim 58 further comprising the steps of:

dialing a telephone number of said designated subscriber in response to said step of automatically initiating said first processing option; and

performing said second processing in response to said step of automatically initiating said second processing option, said second processing selected from the group consisting of (i) providing a listing of said designated subscriber, (ii) leaving a message for said designated subscriber, and (iii) accepting a voice mail for said selected subscriber.

--60. (New) The method according to claim 58 further comprising a step of selectively (iii) identifying an exception command specified by said second speech input and, in response, performing error processing.--

--61. (New) The method according to claim 60 wherein said error processing includes the steps of:

prompting for a third speech input;

performing speech recognition of said third speech input to reselect a designated subscriber;

playing a voice message indicative of said first processing option in connection with said reselected designated subscriber;

providing a second silent delay period immediately subsequent to a completion of said playing step in connection with said reselected designated subscriber; and

selectively (i) identifying a third processing option specified by a fourth speech input and, in response, automatically initiating said third processing option in connection with said reselected designated subscriber (ii) automatically initiating said first processing option in connection with said reselected designated subscriber is response to an absence of said fourth speech input during said second silent period.--

--62. (New) The method according to claim 61 further comprising the steps of:

dialing a telephone number of said reselected designated subscriber in response to said step of automatically initiating said first processing option; and

performing said third processing in response to said step of automatically initiating said third processing option, said third processing selected from the group consisting of (i) providing a listing of said reselected designated subscriber, (ii) leaving a message for said reselected designated subscriber, and (iii) accepting a voice mail for said reselected selected subscriber.--

REMARKS

Independent claims 1, 6, 29, 32, 36, 52 and 55 are amended to more clearly define the subject matter considered to be within the scope of the invention. New claims 58 – 62 are added to afford Applicant the scope of patent protection to which he is considered to be entitled. Accordingly, claims 1-62 are now pending. In view of these amendments, all claims are considered to be allowable for the reasons set forth below.

Drawing Informalities

The objections to the drawings made by the Draftsperson are acknowledged. Corrected drawings will be submitted in response to issuance of a Notice of Allowability.